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NECESSARY
REFLECTIONS
ON THE
Rights and Duties
OF AN
English Parliament.

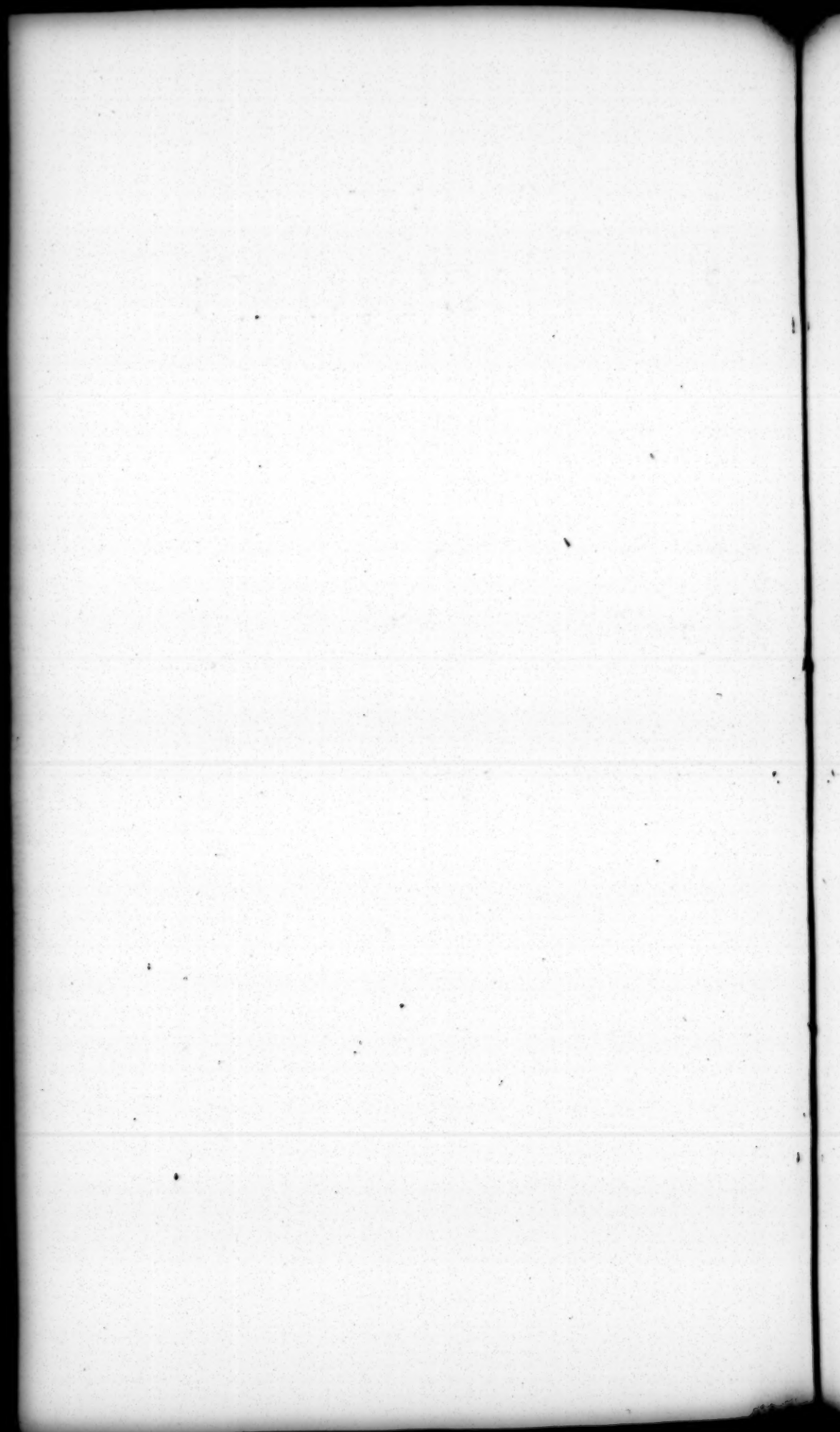
By a Late MEMBER.

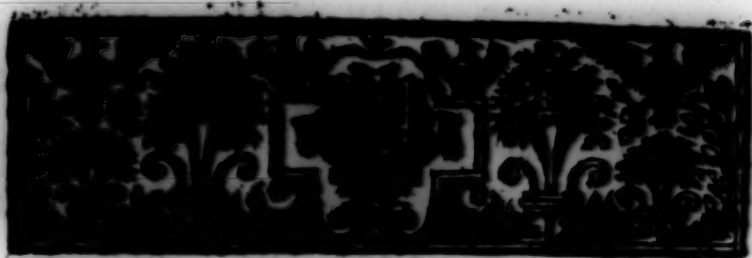


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Necessary Reflections, &c.

NOTHING is so universally discours'd of as the Rights and Duties of a Free Parliament, yet nothing, methinks, seems less understood: at least, if we may guess by the Actions of these great Talkers. What a glorious Figure does our Constitution make in its Representation! Old *Rome*, when in its fullest Extent of Liberty, (which was certainly under the Consulship) was but a Type of what every free-born Subject of *England* is sup-

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pos'd to enjoy. Strangers look on us as the only Happy Part of the Creation! they consider our *Magna Charta* with Envy and Admiration! They almost repine at Providence, that they are not partakers of such an Establishment! How shameful would it then be for us, thus Beautiful at a distance, if on a more near approach, the dazzling Lustre of our Constitution should be discover'd to be no more than a false Vernish; our boasted Freedom no other than real Slavery; our Rights, our Privileges but imaginary, and nothing but the Name of Liberty preserv'd among us?

But, perhaps, it may be objected that such Cautions are unnecessary, that the happy Agreement which has been for many Years between Prince and People en-

entirely destroys all Apprehensions of our experiencing what our Fore-Fathers have done. I grant, indeed, that at present nothing seems more unlikely, *Yet as what has been, may be*, it can certainly be no Fault to keep the Memory of it in View, to the end that by avoiding the Mistakes of former Ages, we may also shun the Evils which ensued.

The Rights of an *English Parliament* can be destroy'd by nothing but by the *Parliament* itself, nor can they forfeit their *Rights* while they preserve their *Duties*; and these *Duties* are to be understood in a Twofold Sense; first, to the Sovereign, and secondly to the People.

It is the Duty of every Representative to consider that *England* is govern'd by three Estates; King, Lords, and Commons; now if any
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one of these have Interests and Views contrary to the others, the Constitution is broke, and all is in danger of Ruin and Confusion: He therefore, who is a Member of that House which is call'd the Lower, ought not too tenaciously to insist on his Privileges in things of small Moment: He that wou'd gain one Point, must yield in another; and it is better sometimes to comply with what is a little Displeasing, than to hazard being overpower'd in Things of greater Consequence. In the Union of the three Estates it is that *England's* Peace and Happiness entirely consists; for what can the Lords effect without the Commons? What can the Commons bring about without the Assent of the Lords? And when by their Contention they Compel, as it were, the King to act of himself,
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what is he but an Arbitrary Monarch? And who can condemn him for being so? Are not his Proceedings justify'd by the Disagreement of his Counsels? Or must he, who is the Head, give way to the impertinent Quarrels and Animosities of the inferior Members?

Tho' our System of Government secures us from Despotick Sway, and every Man sits down in a tranquil Possession of his own Vineyard; yet if by our own default we relinquish that Security either by too much acquiescing with the Power of the acting Ministry, or by oppugning the reasonable Demands of the Crown, who but our selves are to be blam'd?

It, therefore, behoves every Member of that Assembly to preserve in his Memory the History
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of past Times, to the end that nothing may prevail with him either to contradict or oppose such Measures as may be conducive to the Peace and Interest of the Nation.

It is the publick Quiet which above all things is to be consider'd, provided that the Maintenance of it does not injure the Reputation of the Nation abroad, nor in reality impair the Trade and Commerce of the Staple Commodity; for which two Articles, even Life itself; ought not to be look'd upon as too great a Risque, because much more than Life, our future Fame, and the Well-doing of our Posterity, depends upon them : and should either of these sink by our Neglect, we should hereafter, by Foreigners, be esteem'd the Scandal of our Country, and
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our Successors have cause to despise and to abhor our Names.

Vast and Prodigious therefore is the Charge we take upon us in becoming Members of that Assembly, on whose good Conduct and Management every Concern that is, or ought to be dear to the Nation, depends. Would to God that every one would think justly of it; that they would weigh deliberately what it is they undertake, and remember, that a great deal is required from him who calls himself a Patriot; and sure all are, or should be such, who take upon them to mediate between a Sovereign and his People.

All things that are Lawful are not Expedient, and tho' it be the undoubted Right of a Free *Parliament* to call in question

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any Minister who is suspected to have misapply'd the Publick Funds, yet there may happen Occasions when such an Inquisition may cause Ruptures, which may endanger the Tranquillity of the Nation ; all the Difficulty therefore lies, in knowing when, and how, to make an Attempt of such a Detection.

Tho' it must be confess'd that this is a Juncture in which there is little need of such a Caution, all principal Affairs being now in Hands from which we can think our selves in no danger of being deceiv'd ; yet all things being subject to Vicissitudes, it is the Business of all who are, or wish to be Servers of their Country, to reflect what in such an Exigence would best become the Character they bear.

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Not that I would be thought by this Doctrine to enforce a *Passive Obedience* and *Non-Resistance* to every Action that shall be committed by Men in Power: No, Power is not a Sanction for Injustice, nor shall the Greatness of any Minister, protect him from a just Scrutiny into his Behaviour, provided always the Affairs he is employ'd in, are of such a Nature as are proper to be inspected into by a greater Number of *Eyes* than there were *Tongues* to order him in the Management of what was committed to his Care. But whenever a Danger of that kind happens, a private Committee is call'd, and as they are but a small Number, and generally selected from the oldest Members, to whom all Instructions of this kind are useless; I shall

forbear any further Speech concerning it.

Nothing is more common than that Vulgar Reflection, That there are always a great Number of *Yea and Nay Men* in that Honourable House; the Meaning of which is, that too many, who have more Estate than Brains, get themselves chose, in hopes to pass for something more than they are; and having no other Ambition than the *Name* of Fathers of their Country, are to be byass'd by the first subtle Insinuator who aims at a Majority. But this is not their Fault, but that of those by whom they are elected. All that can be expected from such Representatives, is, that they should do no hurt; neither, indeed, do they with *Design*, they being only Tools of other Mens

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Inventions, and, perhaps, as far from wishing well to the Party they espouse, as those who shew themselves most averse to it.

But these are not the Persons to whom I direct this Discourse, nor indeed ought such to be called Members of that Honourable Synod. Methinks, did Men seriously consider the greatness and importance of the Charge they take upon them, they would be very well assur'd of being qualify'd for it before they ventur'd on it ; which did every one do, 'tis probable we should find it a greater Difficulty to find Burgeses, than they who wish to be made so, do in acquiring Votes.

No Man should set up for a Member till he has examin'd and finds in himself a sufficient Stock of Resolution to baffle all
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Opposition which may be made against him in any just Cause; and at the same time, a Moderation and Humility which will enable him to hear, and answer with Patience and Mildness all Objections, tho' never so unreasonable, that may be made in opposition to what he has offer'd.

He ought to be a Person of staunch Loyalty to his Prince; inviolable Integrity and Honour in all his Dealings; full of Good Nature, yet not so much as to be byass'd by the power of Persuasion against Reason; deeply learn'd, and perfectly acquainted with the History not only of his own Country, but also with that of all those which have any thing in them worthy of Remark.

Thus ought every one who sets up for a Burgess to be qualify'd;

lisy'd ; and when a Person not so is made choice of, I know not which is most to be condemn'd, He, for an unjust Partiality to his own Abilities, or the mercenary Temper of the Freeholders by whom he was elected.

It is on a strict Observance of their *Duties*, as I have describ'd them, that their *Rights* depend ; the one cannot be maintain'd without the other, and a Prince might justly enough be compar'd to *Æsop's* Log, who should permit his Subjects to enjoy Arms of Defence against himself, when they had testify'd that they no longer remember'd what was owing to his Regal Dignity.

A never to be forgotten, a never enough lamented Instance of this Truth, is yet recent in the Minds of some among us : The Royal Martyr, tho'

tho' the most Condescending and Meek Prince that ever reign'd, could not suffer his Privileges to be infring'd without exerting a Monarch's Power: He knew it would have been the utmost injustice to his Successors to lessen the Authority of the Crown, and was too nicely good in his Nature, to do any thing which might be a Prejudice to another, whatever he hazarded for himself. Had he consented to the exorbitant Demands of his Parliament, he might probably have liv'd and reign'd many Years, if that Prince may be said to reign, who lives in a mean Dependance on the Power of his audacious Subjects.

When once an Encroachment is beginning to be made on the Crown, it stops not at small Things: the easy Monarch's
Power

Power, by degrees, is parcell'd out, 'till he has nothing left that he can call his own; his very Life is held in Tenure, and if even his Looks will bear a Construction displeasing to those assuming Arbitrators, soon will he find the Name of King too weak for his Defence.

Of how great Consequence therefore is it for a Parliament to observe their *Duties*, if they would retain their *Rights*? And tho' I hope none who at present are chose Members of that House stand in need of any Remonstrances, yet I could be glad that all of them would, at all times, consider the Weight of the Charge they undertake, and that they have a double Duty on them; that to their

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Prince, and to their Country; especially to that part of it, which more immediately claims their Protection, the Place for which they are chose.

It is certainly the Business of every Member to look on himself as the Father of those Men who have elected him; because had they not thought him qualify'd as such, they had never made choice of him, and by that Choice, put the disposal of all they were Masters of into his hands. Is not every thing that either is or ought to be dear to the whole Nation, deposited in the hands of their Representatives in Parliament? and according to their Behaviour, must they not stand or fall? Their boasted Liberty, their Property, all is at stake;

stake; and how Ungenerous, how Cruel, as well as Unjust, would it be, to give up the Interests which are repos'd in us, and which can be prejudic'd by none but those who seem to espouse them?

But not to make a too tedious Harangue on what may as well be spoke in a few Words, it wou'd be, more than can be express'd, advisable that every Member should carefully consult all the Statutes since the Reign of *Henry* the Seventh; the several Votes also in the Parliaments from that time, may be of use to instruct a young and un-experienc'd Senator how to become his Function, and make him act in such a manner, as shall not disgrace the Greatness of his Post.

Many and memorable have been the Services and the Disadvantages this Nation has reap'd by either the too great and mistaken Zeal of those who call themselves Patriots, or a Condescension and criminal Swerving from those Rights which ought never to be laid down, but with our Lives. A just Medium is the thing which must be observ'd, or the Prince or People, and perhaps both, will have good reason to lay the blame of all future Events on the ill Management of the Mediators.

How dreadful must be the Consequence, when the People, refractory to the just and reasonable Demands of the Sovereign, refuse their Aid? How
equally

equally unhappy is it, when the People, to comply with the Desires of the Throne, recede from those Privileges, which, as *English* Men, are born with them, and which should be dearer to them than their very Lives ?

England is in no danger of foreign Foes while she secures herself from home-bred Jars; and the only way to do that, is for the three Estates to continue in a mutual Agreement, neither of them asking, nor refusing, but as Reason, Conscience, and Honour, shall direct. The miserable Event of the contrary between them, I have already hinted at, and need no further explain : worse it cannot be, than has already been ; but pray God preserve us from feeling the Effects

fects of such a Misunderstanding any more.

With how much deliberation therefore ought every Member to weigh what is spoken in that House, before he aims at making any Answer to it ? For tho' a free Liberty of Speech is allow'd, yet it sometimes is the occasion of Disputes, which, by degrees, may be attended with pernicious Consequences: it also breeds bad Blood among Persons, who, as they are Members of one Body, should love each other with a brotherly Affection: it divides the House into Parties, and, according to the Words of our Blessed Saviour, *a House divided against it self cannot stand.*

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The Eyes of the whole World are at present on the *English* Parliament, and the Welfare of the Kingdom, in a great measure, depends on the Conduct of it: With how much Caution then ought they now to act? How circumspect should every peculiar Member be in all his Words? How maturely should he weigh all that is offer'd in that Assembly, at a Time when so much depends upon it? Nor let any one think to escape the just Censure, which, in case of any Disaster, would light on all, by saying he meddled not with the Affair, he was thinking of something else, or was over-persuaded by those he look'd on to be more understanding in those Matters than himself: Indolence
would

would be no Excuse, because it is, at some times, as unlawful to be silent, as it is at others to speak, nor would the Instigations of any other Person be look'd on as a sufficient Plea, since particular Friendships are, or ought to be of no Consequence, when the Interest of our Country is at stake : To our King, our Religion, and our Properties, all other Considerations must give way ; and the least Attempt against any of these is to be look'd on with the utmost Horror and Detestation, tho' made by Persons the most near and dear to us by Blood or Affinity.

What is it that has for so many Years render'd our Alliance so Valuable among the neighbouring

bouring Nations? What is it that puts into our Hands the Ballance of *Europe*, but the good Agreement which has been maintain'd between the Prince and People?

I never look over the *Roman* History but I find something new to be remark'd; whether we consider that Empire under the *Consuls* or the *Cæsars*, it was always Flourishing, always Rich, always Victorious, while the Senate and the Superiors were of one Mind; but when ever they were divided in their Interests and Opinion, of what fatal Consequence was it to their Glory? Had *Julius Cæsar* been less Ambitious, or *Cato* less Severe, the Plains of *Pharsalia* had not been

been dy'd with the best Blood of *Rome*. Neither of these Great Men, equally Deserving, equally Virtuous, tho' of different Principles and Humours, had met with so untimely a Fate, nor had there been those Factions rais'd in *Rome*, which afterwards occasion'd such a Slaughter among the Citizens in the Time of the *Triumvirate*.

But needless it is to fetch Instances from abroad, our own Histories will furnish us with sufficient Examples of the Truth of this Assertion : those dreadful and tedious Feuds, which are call'd the *Barons Wars*, can never be read without filling the Mind with Horror ; and the different Factions rais'd by the
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contending Houses of *York* and *Lancaster*, were the Cause of so much Blood-shed, as *England* had Reason to remember for a long Term of Time.

Never was this Kingdom in so flourishing a State as now! Never did Money circulate with more freedom! And why is all this? To what are we indebted for these Blessings, but to our Trade and Commerce abroad? and how do we maintain that Trade and Commerce abroad, but by our Unanimity and Agreement at home? Let every True-born *Briton* then take care to preserve this domestick Tranquillity, without which, it is impossible to avoid the Misfortunes of former Ages, or to maintain our present glo-

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rious Character, among our Neighbours, or those inestimable Rights and Immunities which we seem so fond of among our selves.

There will always be some barking *Thersites's* among us, some railing *Zoilus's*; and as long as the Liberty of the Press is allow'd in so ample a manner, we shall never be without the Cry, *That the Church is in Danger ; That our Properties are invaded ; and That Strangers too much participate of the Rights and Liberties of the Natives.* But if we consider by what sort of People these Anathema's are thunder'd out, we should as little regard them as the *Grecian* Chiefs did the one,
or

or the Prince of Poets the other.

Tho' nothing is so precious to us as our Liberties, yet methinks it would be of service to the publick Quiet, if there were some Bounds set to the Press, and to the Tongues of our Coffee-House Politicians. How ridiculous is it to hear a Fellow who has just Learning enough to understand a Newspaper, comment on the Actions of Princes ? find fault with one for being too Remiss, with another for his Activity, and then lay down Schemes by what Means such and such a Kingdom might be subdued, or another be preserv'd ; blame the ill Choice of Ministers, and censure, as they please, all the

the grand Councils of the World. The System of Government which they have in *France* can never be pleasing to a Subject of *Great-Britain*; yet is there one Law which it were to be wish'd might be introduc'd here, which is, that of obliging these Free Speakers to lay an Embargo on their Tongues, which would, in time, restrain their Thoughts also from running on what is above their Sphere, and confining them to their own little Callings and Vocations, prove of service to themselves, as well as to the State.

A *Roman* Senate, and an *English* Parliament, have something in them Awful; the very Names of them, methinks, inspire

inspire Veneration and Respect:
 Forbid it therefore, Heaven!
 that any Member of our Great
 Assembly should, by any in-
 direct or imprudent Measures,
 lessen the Solemnity of his
 Charge: I hope none will,
 and to that end, have given
 myself the trouble of present-
 ing them with these few Re-
 monstrances; which, tho' 'tis
 to be wish'd they stand in no
 other need of them than to re-
 fresh their Memory with past
 Events, discover however a sin-
 cere Zeal for the Interest of
 that Country, of which I think
 it my Happiness to be a Na-
 tive; and the Glory of a Mo-
 narch, whom it is the highest
 Honour to serve, and who, I
 hope, has no Subject who will
 not gladly and heartily join
 with

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with me in Prayer, That he
may Live and Reign long the
Blessing of his People, and to
late Posterity, never want an
Heir to fill the Throne of these
Kingdoms.

F I N I S.



